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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/988,145	11/19/2001	Yoshihiro Shigemori	216266US0	8166

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ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

EXAMINER

KUHNS, ALLAN R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1732

DATE MAILED: 06/25/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/988,145

Applicant(s)

SHIGEMORI ET AL.

Examiner

KUHNS

Group Art Unit

1732

— The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet beneath the correspondence address —

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE THREE (3) MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, such period shall, by default, expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____
- ☐ This action is **FINAL**.
- ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, **prosecution as to the merits is closed** in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are pending in the application.
- Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are rejected.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction or election requirement

Application Papers

- ☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on _____ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.
- ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner
- ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 (a)-(d)

- ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 (a)-(d).
- ☐ All ☐ Some* ☐ None of the:
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a))

*Certified copies not received: _____

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). _____
- ☒ Notice of Reference(s) Cited, PTO-892
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948
- ☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152
- ☐ Other _____

Office Action Summary

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1. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. This claim is indefinite due to the phrase "a heating temperature". In order for this claim to further limit claim 1, it would appear that the claim language would need to refer to a temperature used in the process of claim 1, such as the expansion starting temperature.

Clarification is required.

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1 and 3-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Edgren et al. Edgren et al. disclose or suggest the basic claimed method for producing microspheres or microballoons including (1) bringing unexpanded, expandable plastic microballoons or microspheres which have been heated to a temperature lower than an expansion temperature (the microspheres do not expand in the first stage of the process (column 3, lines 30-36)) into contact with a mixture of wetting agent (water) and gas which has been heated to a temperature at least equal to the expansion starting temperature of the microspheres or microballoons, and (2) causing expansion of the microspheres or microballoons. Edgren et al. appear not to explicitly state that the expanded product is cooled, but such is well known and would have been obvious

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to one of ordinary skill in the art in order to cause the expanded product to set in its expanded state.

Edgren et al. disclose the use of a hydrocarbon, as in claim 3, at column 1, lines 28-30. It is submitted that the spray drier of Edgren et al. provides the instantaneous contact required by claim 4. A mixture of wetting agent and microspheres within the range of claim 5 is taught by Edgren et al. at column 3, lines 19-20, and it is submitted that fulfilling the requirements set forth by Edgren et al. at column 3, lines 26-30 would result in a gas to microsphere or microballoon volume ratio within the range of claim 6.

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Allan Kuhns whose telephone number is (703) 308-3462. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Thursday from 7:00 to 5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Crispino, can be reached on (703) 308-3853. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 305-7718.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.

Allan R. Kuhns
ALLAN R. KUHNS
PRIMARY EXAMINER AU 1732
6-19-03